



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao



*Making Aotearoa New Zealand
the most liveable place in the world*
Aotearoa – he whenua mana kura mō te tangata

Weekly Update – Hon David Parker, Minister for the Environment

For the week starting 28 January 2019

Released under the provision of
the Official Information Act 1982

1. Strategic priorities

1.1. Urban

The proposed site visit and meeting with Auckland Council is confirmed for 7 February. You will join other Ministers on a tour of significant growth and development areas around South Auckland. This will be followed by a meeting with the Council about the Auckland Housing and Urban Growth Joint Programme. You will receive a briefing on 1 February with finalised details.


1.2. Essential Freshwater Advisory Groups

The Advisory Groups have begun their meetings for the year. A schedule of meetings has been provided to your office. We are working with your office to find dates for you to meet the chairs, and the full groups in February.

The Science and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) met on 24 January.

We are preparing for the next Freshwater Leaders Group (FLG) and Kahui Wai Māori (KWM) meeting on 29 January, and a joint meeting with a Council Water sub-group joining the STAG, FLG and KWM on 30 January.

s 9(2)(g)(i)



1.3. System Reform


You received briefing 18-B-05094 *Comprehensive review of the resource management system – further decisions* on 30 November. Based on your feedback on this briefing and the Cabinet paper narrative, we are drafting a Cabinet paper on the scope and process of the review that you have directed officials to prepare for February. We will provide you with a briefing attaching this draft Cabinet paper for your consideration on 7 February.

The briefing will include follow-up advice on outstanding questions regarding the review. As part of formula ing this advice, we have met with the Parliamentary Counsel Office to discuss drafting options for the Expert Advisory Group.

The briefing will also provide analysis and talking points on the Environmental Defence Society synthesis report *Reform of the Resource Management System: The next generation* that you are launching on 12 February.

2. Updates for noting

2.1. s 9(2)(g)(i)



2.2. Primary sector engagement and communications

We are working with the Ministry for Primary Industries to plan coordinated engagement and communications with the primary sector across environmental issues that will impact the sector, including water, climate change and biodiversity. You will be briefed on this in coming weeks. At a high level, we propose over the next 3-4 months to have a programme of visits by yourself and other Ministers to raise awareness and set the scene on specific issues (such as farm planning, integrated catchment planning, and sediment).

The April 2019 release of the Environmental Reporting synthesis report EA2019 is expected to prompt significant discussion about environmental pressures and how to address them. This sets the scene for Budget announcements and the release of proposals on freshwater for consultation in July.

In the interim we are continuing to engage with primary sector stakeholders. For example, we have a workshop with the Federated Farmers Board on 4 February to discuss water and climate change.

2.3. Conferenz National Freshwater conference on 11 February

You are scheduled to speak at the Conferenz National Freshwater conference on 11 February.

We are preparing talking points and Powerpoint slides for you. This is an opportunity to set the scene for the year ahead across the environment portfolio and provide an update on water policy development.

2.4. Improving data and the science system

In a Newstalk interview on 15 January, Dr Mike Joy raised concerns about what he has termed the "self-reporting" and therefore lack of independent reporting undertaken by Land and Water Aotearoa (LAWA) and regional councils. Monitoring results released by LAWA in December 2018 state that 97 of the 700 swimming sites (14 per cent) monitored were deemed unsuitable for swimming. Dr Joy states that 14 per cent "is a snapshot figure, as it just represents one moment when they were tested and if you look at it over the year, half of them will fail over that time." Dr Joy's concerns reinforce the need to improve data and the science system in order to improve our ability to report on the state of our environment.

While there is no quick fix for addressing issues with the data and the science system, the review of the Environmental Reporting Programme (ER Programme) by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) will provide valuable input and

momentum in helping direct where our focus (and others) should be in addressing the issues. We are currently in the process of drafting advice for you regarding the PCE's proposed review of the ER Programme, as well as where we see opportunities across the science system (particularly around science investment) and our strategic engagement with Crown Research Institutes. This advice is scheduled to be with you by mid-February.

2.5. Horizons Regional Council

On 19 December 2018 you met the Chair and senior staff from Horizons Regional Council to discuss issues regarding the One Plan. Officials are joining a workshop with Council staff and their advisers on 1 February to work through aspects of delivering a combined Plan amendment. This will cover the outdated leaching table and a temporary consenting pathway for those unable to meet the requirements of the table. We will continue to inform you of progress.

2.6. Waste Free Summer digital campaign

Late last year we advised that we would run a digital campaign over summer to engage people on reducing waste – an area that our research has shown New Zealanders care deeply about. This campaign launched on 16 December 2018 and will continue to 24 February. Our goal is to reach 1 million New Zealanders with information that will help them take effective action, and so far it's tracking well:

- Reach so far from all social media posts is more than 1,005,000.
- The Waste Free Summer webpages have been viewed 18,000 times.

The strongest theme from the large number of comments received is calling on the Government to address the problem of plastic packaging at the source – particularly to regulate manufacturers/retailers or introduce a tax.

2.7. Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Board appointments – job advertisement

The public advertisement for the two upcoming vacancies on the EPA Board is now live on jobs.govt.nz. Ministry officials have shared the ad link with their professional networks, the EPA, nominating agencies (e.g. Treasury, Ministry for Women) and on the Ministry's LinkedIn and Twitter. The deadline for receiving applications is by 25 February. We will then proceed to shortlist candidates and expect to brief you on this in March.

Briefing notes

28 January – 22 February

Title	Lead agency	What this briefing covers	Date due to your office
s 9(2)(f)(iv)			
Ozone Layer Protection Act 1996 - 2016 and 2017 Annual Reports	MfE	Provides you with the 2016 and 2017 Annual Reports under the Ozone Layer Protection Act 1996.	31 January
Briefing for your attendance at Waitangi and the Iwi Chairs Forum	MfE	Provides you with suggested talking points (Appendix 1) and supporting information for the upcoming Iwi Chairs Forum at Waitangi on 1 February 2018.	31 January
Auckland Housing and Urban Growth Joint Programme	MfE	Finalised details for the Auckland Housing and Urban Growth Joint Programme with Auckland Council governance arrangements and work programme, and details for a site visit and workshop on 7 February	1 February
Appeals to Southland Regional Council Land and Water Plan	Crown Law	Crown Law are providing a briefing on the question of the appeals to the Land and Water Plan	1 February
Urban Planning Pillar: draft National Policy Statement on Urban Development	MfE	This briefing provides a preliminary draft National Policy Statement on Urban Development (Quality Intensification) for discussion at the 12 February Urban Growth Agenda Ministers Meeting.	7 February
Comprehensive review of the resource management system - draft Cabinet paper and Environmental Defence Society report	MfE	This briefing attaches a draft Cabinet paper on the scope and process of the review for your consideration. It provides follow-up advice on outstanding questions regarding the review. This paper also attaches analysis on the Environmental Defence Society's synthesis report on the resource management system, as well as talking points for your speech at the report launch in February.	7 February
Three Waters regulation – initial concept for discussion	DIA (joint MfE and MoH)	This briefing provides an overview of the policy options under development to improve regulation of Three Waters services. This will inform the joint Ministers' meeting on 14 February.	TBC (prior to 14 February 2019)
Urban Growth Agenda: Wider costs and benefits of urban development – identifying, measuring, and valuing costs and benefits	MfE	This paper presents findings on identifying, measuring and valuing the range of costs and benefits associated with urban development.	14 February
Options to strengthen the framework for spatial planning in NZ	MfE	High level options to strengthen the framework for spatial planning in New Zealand that could be publicly consulted on in mid-2019 as part of the planned consultation on quality intensification and other urban matters.	15 February

3. Cabinet material

28 January – 22 February

Paper name	Committee	What this paper covers	Our Suggested timeframes
Reclassifying five organisms as "not new" under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996	(ENV) Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee	Proposes that five organisms be reclassified as "not new" under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996.	Due to lodge: 14 February Due to ENV Committee: 21 February Due to Cabinet: 25 February
Comprehensive review of the resource management system – scope and process	(ENV) Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee	Seeks agreement to the scope and process of a comprehensive review of the resource management system in 2019.	TBC
s 9(2)(f)(iv)			TBC
s 9(2)(f)(iv)			TBC
Approval of policy decisions on EEZ decommissioning regulations	(ENV) Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee	Following public consultation on proposals for decommissioning regulations under the EEZ Act, this paper seeks Cabinet approval for final policy decisions and to issue drafting instructions	TBC

4. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

Paper name	Agency	Committee	Our comments on the paper
Establishing a new independent infrastructure body	Treasury	DEV	<p>The paper proposes to establish a new independent infrastructure body to carry out infrastructure strategy and planning, and infrastructure procurement and delivery support.</p> <p>MfE commented on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need to signal how the Government will direct the infrastructure body in terms of the outcomes it should be seeking to deliver in the infrastructure strategy. For example, these could include infrastructure that supports the four wellbeings, adaptation to climate change and managing the impacts of natural hazards, quality urban development and co-ordinated infrastructure and land-use planning, and is efficiently used and maintained. the timeframe of the infrastructure strategy ideally being longer than 30 years given the long lifetimes of infrastructure and the time horizons needed in climate adaptation the opportunity for the infrastructure body to use the spatial planning framework (currently under development) to build consensus around infrastructure priorities.

Building system legislative reform programme: Release of discussion paper	MBIE	DEV	<p>The paper seeks agreement to undertake public consultation on proposed changes to the building regulatory system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MfE supported a proposed cap on the liability of building consent authorities, and requirement for improved building product information and certification. These proposals may assist councils to support the innovation needed in the building sector to build at pace and scale, and limit risk averse behaviour • MfE suggested that building product information requirements should also include information on the environmental impacts of the products. <p>More broadly, we commented on future opportunities to improve the Building Act, including for example, the need to address building performance and ensure the Act takes the impact of climate change into account, and the need to consider any gaps between RMA and Building Act regulation.</p>
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5. Official Information Act requests

5.1. Ministerial

Topic	Correspondent	Reference	At your office	Due to send
Copies of various Essential Freshwater briefings referenced in reply to WPQ 26600	s 9(2)(a) Parliament	18-O-2555	28 January	4 February
Copy of Methyl Bromide and Forestry Implications Letter – Thursday 20 Sep (Ref WQ 28195-2018)	s 9(2)(a) MP for Coromandel	18-O-02788	29 January	5 February
Written advice relating to potential taxes, levies, permit allocation or other regulation of nitrogen fertiliser and/or nitrogen leached.	s 9(2)(a) Senior Policy Advisor	18-O-02556	5 February	12 February

5.2. Departmental

Topic	Correspondent	Reference	Due to send
Records pertaining to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Genetic Modification dated 1 December 1999 to 31 March 2001.	s 9(2)(a)	18-D-02789	7 February
Copy of business case prepared by ECan for the Ministry for the Environment that describes how improving Te Waihora to national standards would have 'severe social and economic' consequences.	s 9(2)(a) McGill University, Department of Natural Resource Sciences	18-D-02833	8 February
Personal grievances and workplace bullying complaints from 2014 – 2018 per year and region	s 9(2)(a)	18-D-02830	11 February
Clarification of 1080 and eco-toxic logo	s 9(2)(a)	18-D-02832	11 February
Waste and plastic bottle waste destinations and receivers	s 9(2)(a)	19-D-00004	13 February

List of Uber and taxi rides – December 2017 - 18	s 9(2)(a) [redacted] New Zealand Taxpayers Union	19-D-00073	13 February
Information, provisions and procedures for fireworks from 1996	s 9(2)(a) [redacted]	19-D-00006	13 February
Diversity, integration, and cohesion	s 9(2)(a) [redacted] CaDDANZ (Capturing the Diversity Dividend of Aotearoa New Zealand)	19-D-0005	13 February

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